

**G**olfdom allowed me to abuse its expense account late last year to perform some vital undercover analysis at several classic courses. No, I was not knocking on the office doors of America's finest superintendents to study the architecture of their courses or to learn about their innovative maintenance practices.

My job was to keep a count of denim-clad superintendents vs. those wearing khakis on the job. You know about khakis — the ones that are sometimes *superimposed* in print.

I visited some 18 superintendents on the job in the last two months. One was dressed in cotton pants because he was going to play golf. One wore shorts two days in a row because it was hot. The rest of you were clad in those "dreadful," work-ready blue jeans. I know it's shocking stuff, but that's my contribution to the latest weird flare-up in our corporate, er, golf world.

Some other thoughts, observations and things learned from recent travels:

Mark Michaud's discovery of an old tee on the 7th hole at Shinnecock Hills GC wins the 2000 award for "Best Archaeological Find By a Superintendent." The old Seth Raynor tee is about 10 yards left of the current tee, but the new angle will make all the difference in the world.

Now the famed par-3 will play more like a true Redan. And Michaud's crew can finally cut down the hideous hedge shielding the current tee from the sight of other golfers.

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There's plenty of outstanding in-house restoration work taking place on Long Island. Karl Olson quietly continues to restore The National Golf Links of America; Craig Currier is fixing up the "other" Bethpage courses; and veteran assistant superintendent Miles McLaughlin is putting back the wild and wacky Devereux Emmet design at Huntington CC.

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The boldest new set of greens I saw last year belong to George Bahto's redesign of Stonebridge GC, opening this spring in Hauppauge, N.Y. It is a public access C.B. Macdonald/Seth Raynor tribute course, and a couple of the greens rival anything Bahto's heroes ever built.

## Ramblings from a Recent Road Trip

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



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How about that Arnold Palmer and his blue-blazered buddies at the USGA? The King wants to beef up his stock portfolio by endorsing Callaway's new illegal driver, a move that could lead to two sets of rules and the USGA's irrelevancy. Yet for some reason, the USGA wants to keep him on as its membership spokesman.

The parties mentioned should read Robert Brown's wonderful new book, *The Way of Golf*. Brown looks at the state of modern golf and why certain values such as the rules, sound course design and other traditions are so important.

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The highlight of Milorganite's Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium was a panel discussion and presentation by two superintendents who've recently completed restoration projects. Mike Morris, superintendent of Crystal Downs CC in Frankfort, Mich., and Scott Austin, superintendent of Midland Hills CC in St. Paul, Minn., gave outstanding presentations with plenty of interesting before-and-after photos. Also present were the quality-conscious Hartman Brothers group, who carried out the Midland Hills work and gave the audience hope that there are contractors who worry about details and genuinely care about the finished product.

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Finally, I'd like to thank the audience of 300 or so Wisconsin superintendents for minimizing the eye rolls when I preached about the return of various elements to the look and playing characteristics of bunkers — namely, the concept of "irregularity."

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The moral of all this rambling: Long live denim.

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*Geoff Shackelford's new book is ALISTER MACKENZIE'S CYPRESS POINT CLUB. He can be reached at geoffshackelford@aol.com.*